

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of modifying a first user's user
2 profile for a data-class recommender, comprising the steps
3 of:

4 receiving feedback from a first user scoring
5 examples falling into various data-classes;

6 refining said first user's user profile
7 responsively to a said feedback;

8 modifying said first user's user profile
9 responsively to data from a second user's user profile;

10 said step of modifying including modifying such
11 that a frequency of recommendations of at least one data-
12 class is increased without decreasing a frequency of
13 recommendations of any other data-classes, whereby said
14 first user's user profile is expanded in scope according to
15 preferences stored in said second user's user profile.

1 2. A method as in claim 1, wherein said first
2 user's user profile includes a specialized target
3 description of favored data-classes and said step of
4 modifying includes generalizing said specialized target
5 description such that it encompasses at least one
6 specialized target description of said second user's user
7 profile.

1 3. A method as in claim 2, wherein said step of
2 modifying includes substituting at least a union of
3 specialized descriptions of said first user's user profile
4 and said second user's user profile for said specialized
5 description of said first user's user profile.

1 4. A method as in claim 1, wherein said step of
2 generalizing includes substituting at least a union of
3 specialized descriptions of said first user's user profile
4 and said second user's user profile for said specialized
5 description of said first user's user profile.

1 5. A method of modifying a first user's user
2 profile for a data-class recommender, comprising the steps
3 of:

4 receiving feedback from a first user scoring
5 examples falling into various data-classes;

6 refining said first user's user profile
7 responsively to a said feedback;

8 selecting test-data for revising said first
9 user's user profile responsively to data from at least a
10 second user's user profile;

11 requesting feedback on said test-data from said
12 first user and modifying said first user's user profile
13 responsively to said feedback.

6. A method as in claim 5, wherein said step of selecting includes selecting only test-data for which feedback incorporated in said first user's profile increases a discriminating power of said first user's user profile.

7. A method as in claim 7, wherein said selecting includes selecting primarily test-data for which said first user's user profile is insufficient for said recommender to determine whether said test-data would be favored or disfavored.

8. A method as in claim 5, wherein said step of selecting includes filtering a universe of data choices through a specialized description of a concept space.

9. A data-class recommender, comprising:
a learning engine;
a user interface device connectable to said learning engine;

said learning engine being connectable to a data source containing descriptions of data selections;

said learning engine being programmed to receive, through said user interface, feedback from a first user evaluating said data selections and to progressively generate a description of data selections that are favored

11 and disfavored by said first user, thereby generating a
12 first user profile;

13 said learning engine being further programmed to
14 generate recommendations of data selections for said first
15 user responsively to said first user profile;

16 said learning engine being further programmed to
17 selectively generate recommendations of data selections for
18 said first user responsively to said first user profile and
19 at least a second user profile of a second user.

1 10. A method as in claim 9, wherein said
2 learning engine is programmed such that said first user
3 profile includes a narrow description defining target data
4 selections and a broad description defining non-target data
5 selections, the recommendations being derived from a space
6 of selections lying between said broad and narrow
7 descriptions.

1 11. A method as in claim 9, wherein said
2 learning engine is programmed such that said first user
3 profile includes at least a narrow description defining
4 target data selections and said learning engine is further
5 programmed to compare a level of narrowness in said narrow
6 description to a threshold such that said first user
7 profile results in recommendations embracing a range of

8 target data that is narrower than said threshold and said
 9 learning engine is further programmed to selectively
 10 generate recommendations of data selections for said first
 11 user responsively to said first user profile and said at
 12 least a second user profile responsively to a result of so-
 13 comparing said level with said threshold.

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